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Time does not admit of my entering here into the details of the arrangement which I should propose. I have convinced myself that, owing to the causes above-mentioned, every scrap of evidence relating to the various subjects which fall within the province of the Society admits of being systematically classified.

If the project finds favour with the Society, I should propose that a classification committee should be appointed, the functions of which would be, in the first place, to determine a classification from the materials already recorded in published works, dividing each branch of evidence into classes, subclasses, varieties, and subvarieties; to letter and number each class and variety in such a manner as to enable it be briefly, yet accurately, expressed in maps. Having done this; to obtain fresh evidence of the distribution of each class and variety by means of the notes and queries already established in the *Quarterly Journal*; to rearrange the classification in accordance with the fresh evidence by this means obtained; to map out the distribution of the several varieties in such a manner as may be found most practicable. Finally, to report periodically to the Society, exhibiting the distribution maps which have been drawn up.

I feel convinced that some such arrangement as this would be the best means of enabling us to extricate ourselves from the empirical stage through which the science of man is at present struggling; and that it would lead us by degrees to what must be the ultimate object of this and all other allied societies, viz., a knowledge of the laws of nature which have influenced the growth and development of the human race.

A discussion followed, in which the President, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Busk, Dr. A. Campbell, and Col. Lane Fox took part.

ORDINARY MEETING, FEBRUARY 23rd, 1869.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY, F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

The Assistant Secretary made the following communication on the part of Don Alfonso Steffens :—

IX.—On some Stone Implements from the Island of San Jose. By DON ALFONSO STEFFENS.

DON ALFONSO STEFFENS, a German merchant, who deals in pearls and precious stones, and a long time resident in Panama, is the owner of two or three islands in the Bay of Panama, which he purchased for the right of pearl fishing. During his

inspections he made excursions into the interior of these islands, and, though not a scientific man himself, he wishes to help inquirers on scientific subjects. During one of these expeditions to the island of San Jose, he induced the natives to open a grave for him, of which there are a great number on a summit hidden by rank tropical vegetation; in the grave opened, they found the implements exhibited. He would have dug deeper in the grave, expecting to find beneath some other objects, when a lizard, bloated in form, and yet somewhat like a camelion, of which the natives are very much afraid, appearing in a tree overhead, they immediately desisted, and could not be induced to dig another foot of soil.

The whole surface of the island was covered with broken pottery, and showed that it must have been at one time densely populated. His idea was, that the islands were populated before the main land northwards had any inhabitants, and by a superior race, and he formed this conclusion from the more elegant forms and designs of the pottery he found scattered about.

No mention was made of the form of the graves, or of the materials used in their construction. A portion of a skull and several teeth in a portion of the ramus were also found, but crumbled away on being touched. These he did not disturb. He purposes to visit the same place and collect everything, without being satisfied with his own estimate of their value, in the hope that whatever he forwards to England may be set in order when delivered to the Society.

Some remarks on these implements were made by Mr. Carter Blake, Sir John Lubbock, and Col. Lane Fox.

The Honorary Secretaries read a series of reports on customs connected with child-bearing amongst the natives of Australia and New Zealand, communicated by Joseph Hooker, Esq., M.D., F.R.S., of which the following is an abstract:—

1. *Is Child-bearing Assisted or Solitary?*

Assisted, invariably; formerly by men, who had the name and credit of *tolungas*, or doctors, and who, squatting in front of the female about to be confined, pressed his knees against her chest, gradually extending the pressure downwards until the child was born. At present females assist principally, acting in much the same manner. Native women are seldom, and only from extreme weakness, confined while lying down. Confinements in the open air are preferred, but it is believed from a superstitious feeling.—W. H. SEARANKE.

On the approach of labour, the woman was placed in a house apart from the *kainga* (village), where she was watched until the first efforts to give birth, and then assistance was rendered by a person applying his or her knees to the stomach of the woman in labour, holding her